

# ARNOLD ARBORETUM

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY



# BULLETIN

## OF

# POPULAR INFORMATION

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**Asiatic Azaleas.** Of the thirty-four species of *Azalea* (*Rhododendron* subgenus *Anthrodendron*) of eastern Asia five species are thoroughly established in the Arboretum. These are in the order of their flowering, *R. yedoense*, *R. Schlippenbachii*, *R. reticulatum*, *R. obtusum* var. *Kaempferi*, and *R. japonicum*.

The yellow-flowered Chinese *R. molle* (*R. sinense* of some authors and not to be confounded with the plant known in gardens as *Azalea mollis* which is a hybrid), is in the Arboretum and occasionally flowers here, although it cannot be considered hardy in this climate. The Japanese *R. Tschonoskii*, with flowers more minute than those of other Azaleas, is an old inhabitant of the Arboretum. It has, however, no value as a garden plant and is only interesting as a botanical curiosity. There are several other Asiatic species of *Azalea* in the Arboretum nurseries and a few of them, judging by regions where they grow naturally, will perhaps prove able to adapt themselves to New England conditions. None of them, however, will be as valuable garden plants as the five species mentioned in the first paragraph of this Bulletin. Some of the species, however, which the Arboretum has introduced from southern Japan and Formosa may be expected to be valuable additions to the garden flora of the southern states. Mention of *R. yedoense* and its variety *poukhanense* was made in a recent issue of these Bulletins. It is of interest that the great rainfall and low temperature of April 30 and May 1 did not injure the flowers of this Korean plant which are in as good condition as they were a week ago.

**Rhododendron Schlippenbachii.** The pale pink fragrant flowers,

which are about three inches in diameter and marked on one of the lobes of the corolla with red-brown spots, are perhaps more beautiful than those of any other Azalea, certainly of any Azalea which has proved hardy in the Arboretum. *R. Schlippenbachii* is one of the commonest shrubs of Korea and often forms the dominant undergrowth in open woods. From Korea it crosses into northeastern Manchuria where it grows on the shores of Possiet Bay; it occurs, too, in two localities in northern Japan. Wilson found it extraordinarily abundant in Korea on the lower slopes of Chiri-san and on the Diamond Mountains, which were where he visited this region in June "a wonderful sight with literally miles and miles of the purest pink from the millions of flowers of this Azalea." In Korea this Azalea on the wind-swept grass-covered cliffs of the coast grow less than a foot high but flowers abundantly. In the forests of the interior it often grows to a height of fifteen feet and forms a tall and slender or a broad and shapely shrub. The leaves are large for an Azalea, being from three and a half inches to four inches long and sometimes nearly three inches wide, and are arranged in whorls of five at the end of the branches. This plant grows further north than any other Azalea, with the exception of the North American *Rhodora*. The thermometer in the region of the Diamond Mountains usually registers every winter a temperature of 35° to 40° below zero Fahrenheit. There is therefore no reason why this Azalea should not flourish in the coldest parts of New England. It has flowered now for several years in the Arboretum, and planted in an exposed sunny position has never suffered. Its hardiness and the beauty of its flowers make it one of the most valuable shrubs, if not the most valuable, which northeastern North America has obtained from Northeastern Asia. This Azalea is still rare in gardens, but large quantities of seeds collected by Wilson in Korea in 1917 and 1918 were distributed in this country and in England. The seedlings, however, only make one growth during the season and the young plants increase slowly in size. The time, however, is not far distant when this inhabitant of the Diamond Mountains will, during the early days of the month of May, be one of the chief ornaments of the gardens of New England.

*Rhododendron reticulatum* is the name now adopted for the Japanese Azalea better known as *R. rhombicum*. This is a common and widely distributed Japanese plant which sometimes forms a bushy tree from twenty to twenty-five feet in height, but is more often a shrub three or four feet tall. The flowers appear before the leaves and vary from rose-color to red-purple or magenta. They are handsome but of a color which makes it desirable to so place the plants that the flowers will not be contrasted with any but white flowers. This Azalea now on the lower end of Azalea Path has been growing in the Arboretum since 1893; it is perfectly hardy, but has not before been as full of flowers as it is this spring.

*Rhododendron obtusum* var. *Kaempferi*, or as it has usually been called in this country *Rhododendron* or *Azalea Kaempferi*, introduced by the Arboretum into gardens in 1892, is now gradually becoming known and appreciated in the north Atlantic states where it has proved



hardy and where it flowers abundantly every year. It is the only bright red-flowered Azalea which is hardy in the Arboretum, and although the flowers are less beautiful than those of *R. Schlippenbachii* and *R. japonicum* the plants when in bloom make a more brilliant and sensational display than any others which can be grown in this climate. The flowers are soon injured by a hot sun and the best results have been obtained with this Azalea with plants grown under the shade of trees or on the north side of Conifers, as at the northern base of Hemlock Hill in the rear of the Laurels (*Kalmia latifolia*). The plants are covered with opening flower-buds and before the end of this week will make on Azalea Path and Bussey Hill Road one of the great flower festivals of the Arboretum year.

*Rhododendron japonicum* is common and widely distributed over a large part of the main island of Japan where it grows on grass-covered slopes and among other shrubs. It was first raised here in 1893 from seeds collected by Professor Sargent on the hills above Nikko. It was, however, long mistaken here for another plant and has suffered from the confusion of names which at different times have been given to it. In recent years its value as a garden plant, however, has been recognized at the Arboretum; and it is now realized that it is the handsomest of the yellow or orange-flowered Azaleas, with the exception of its hybrids and of the Appalachian *R. calendulaceum*, and, with the exception of *R. Schlippenbachii*, the handsomest of the Asiatic Azaleas which can be grown in the northern states. There is a form of this plant with deep yellow flowers (var. *superba*) in the collection which promises to be a good garden plant here. The hybrid raised in Mr. Hunnewell's garden at Wellesley, Massachusetts, between *R. japonicum* and the Chinese *R. molle* (*R. sinense*) and called "Louisa Hunnewell" is the most beautiful of all yellow-flowered Azaleas, and the most beautiful hardy hybrid Azalea which has been raised in the United States. It is of the same parentage as that of the Azaleas which have been propagated in large numbers in Dutch and Belgian nurseries during the last thirty or forty years and sold under the name of *Azalea mollis*. The correct name for this hybrid is *Rhododendron Kosterianum* and it must not be confused with the true *Rhododendron* or *Azalea mollis* which is a yellow-flowered plant from the hills of eastern China, and, as we have already said, one of the parents of *R. Kosterianum*.

**Chaenomeles.** This is the generic name now given to the red-flowered Quince which was formerly called *Pyrus japonica*. This plant has been in American gardens for many years and at one time was one of the most popular garden and hedge plants in the country, especially in the middle and southern states where it is still common. It is not rare in New England, although perhaps less common here than southward. The flower-buds sometimes suffer here in severe winters, and the plants need constant attention to save them from the San José scale which commonly infests this Quince. Although first introduced into Europe from Japanese gardens, it is not a Japanese but a Chinese plant and is properly called *Chaenomeles lagenaria*. There is a collection of garden varieties of this Quince chiefly raised in Germany in the Shrub Col-

lection, and this spring the plants have been unusually full of flowers. The varieties differ in the color of the flowers and in the size and shape of the plants. The most conspicuous of these plants when it is in bloom is the var. *Simonii*, of dwarf habit and with intensely scarlet flowers. The white flowers of the var. *nevalis* attract attention, as do the cardinal red flowers of the var. *cardinalis*. The varieties of this Quince do not seem to be known to American nurserymen, and plants probably are difficult to obtain. Another species of the red-flowered Quinces is a native of Japan and a smaller and hardier shrub than the Chinese species, with smaller flowers and fruits, and often semiprostrate stems. Often called in gardens *Pyrus Maulei*, the correct name for this plant is *Chaenomeles japonica*. There is a dwarf variety of this plant (var. *alpina*) with smaller flowers and fruit which is an excellent subject for the rock-garden. *Chaenomeles japonica* has been growing in the Arboretum since 1893 when it was raised from seeds collected by Professor Sargent on the mountains of Hondo. A hybrid of the Chinese and Japanese species raised in Switzerland several years ago has received the name of *Chaenomeles superba*. There are several named varieties of this hybrid in the Arboretum collection differing in the color of the flowers. The varieties *rosea*, *perfecta* and *alba* are perhaps the most distinct and interesting.

**Berberis Dielsiana**, raised from seeds collected by Purdom in Shensi, is one of the new Barberries in the Chinese collection on Bussey Hill where it has already grown eight feet tall and comparatively broad. It is one of the species with flowers in drooping racemes, like those of the common Barberry. It is a handsome plant, and valuable for its early flowers which this year were opening the middle of April, and only a day or two later than those of another Chinese species, *Berberis dictyophylla* which has always been the earliest Barberry to flower in the Arboretum. *Berberis Dielsiana* first flowered in the Arboretum in 1916, and in that year the flowers opened the middle of May. This Barberry deserves the attention of persons interested in hardy early-flowering shrubs.

**Daphne genkwa**. A small plant of this Daphne by Hickory Path, near Centre Street, is now covered with its violet-colored flowers which open before the leaves unfold. Although first sent to this country from Japanese gardens nearly sixty years ago, this plant is still little known here. It is not very hardy and suffers here in cold winters; it flourishes, however, on the shores of Buzzards Bay in southern Massachusetts and it will probably grow well in the southern states. At the north, grown in a pot, it should make a good subject for conservatory decoration as it could easily be brought into flower at midwinter, and the unusual color of the fragrant flowers would make it popular.

**Hawthorns** are already in bloom, and Hawthorn-flowers will open in the Arboretum continuously during the next six or seven weeks. The first species to flower this year is as usual the European *Crataegus nigra*; it is closely followed by several American species of the large-growing, large-flowered species of the Molles Group, notably *C. mollis*, *C. Arnoldiana* and *C. submollis*.